

Veterans' Services

Mission

To provide needed assistance to Hoosier veterans, their dependents, spouses, and service personnel.

Summary of Activities

Hoosier veterans are served by the **Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs (IDVA)** and the **Indiana Veterans' Home (IVH)** at West Lafayette, Indiana. The IDVA provides certification of eligibility for a variety of veterans' benefits, including free college tuition for the children of disabled veterans, tax abatements, and veteran license plates. It also approves all public educational and training programs within the state for veterans that have GI Bill education benefits. IDVA staff monitor the activities of each County Veterans Services Officer (CVSO) office, providing training to newly-appointed CVSOs.

The IDVA administers the 110-acre Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery, located in Madison, Indiana. Staff are responsible for all aspects of the cemetery, including scheduling, maintenance, visitation, and burial. The cemetery was opened on December 1, 1999.

The IVH provides comprehensive and skilled nursing care for 264 residents with high acuity levels, major disabilities, and multiple chronic conditions associated with the aging process. It provides assisted living care for 55 residents who require 24-hour observation and medication administration, but do not require around-the-clock licensed nursing care. IVH also provides self-care rooms for 38 residents who can care for themselves but have conditions or disabilities that negate normal employment, or have serious financial situations.

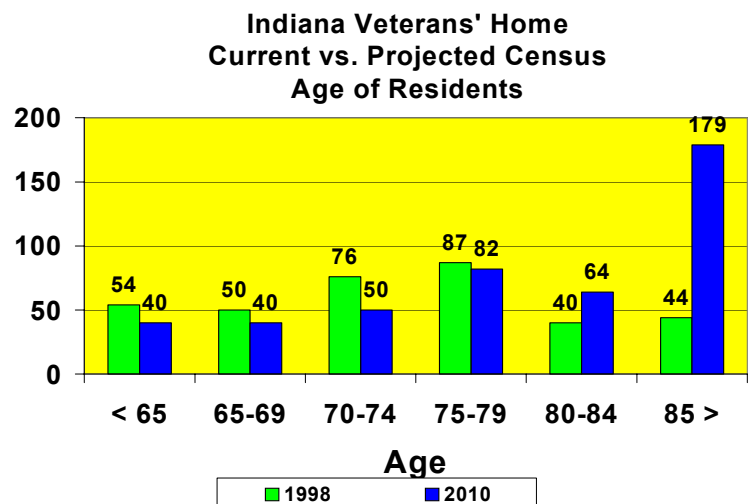
The IVH staff (428 employees and 11 contractual staff) includes two full-time doctors, two respiratory therapists, and three clinical pharmacists, as well as physical and occupational therapy; audiology and speech pathology; a part-time dentist, podiatrist, and optometrist; consulting physician specialists; and extensive nursing, social work, and recreation staff.

External Factors

The IVH and the **Indiana State Department of Health** conducted a needs assessment study in 1999, based on Veterans' Administration (VA) demographic projections of World War II veterans. The study showed that a significant increase in the number of veterans age 85 years and older will result in a need for a greater bed capacity at the IVH. The IVH will also have to accommodate a growing nationwide shortage of certified nurse aides.

The recent passage of the Veteran's Millennium Healthcare and Benefits Act mandates more regional, community-based veteran's services, such as home health care, adult day services, and community mental health services. This will require greater integration of IVH and VA services.

The number of burials at the Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery are expected to increase significantly with the completion of the facility and now that an increased number of veterans are aware of the facility's existence.



Evaluation and Accomplishments

In coordination with the **Office of the Lieutenant Governor**, the American Legion, and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the IDVA conducted an extensive outreach effort to provide veterans with information about the benefits to which they are entitled.

In May 2003, the administration building, chapel, and grounds of the Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery were completed and dedicated.

State long-term care surveys of the IVH in 1999 and 2000 produced no finding of deficiency in care. Only five percent of all nursing homes meet this standard, indicating the quality of care being provided to Hoosier veterans. No state survey or VA inspection has identified any serious care-related finding since 1994. Resident and family surveys, conducted by an external organization in 1999, reflected a very high rate of customer satisfaction.



The Indiana Veterans' Memorial Cemetery

Plans for the Biennium

The IVH Applied Strategic Performance Planning process has identified the following primary objectives:

1. Maintain and enhance the quality of resident care.
2. Optimize utilization of available resources.
3. Maintain and train sufficient staff to meet all resident care needs.
4. Acquire and maintain appropriate equipment, and maintain a safe, effective facility.
5. Create a proactive partnership with the VA to better integrate veterans' health care services.

In an effort to continue outreach services to Hoosier veterans, the IDVA is planning five regional "Benefit Fairs." The Fairs will feature both private-sector and public-sector providers. The goal is to provide education and information on benefits available to Hoosier veterans, assist veterans in accessing these benefits, and provide a vibrant environment for job seekers and providers.

